A Newsletter from the CIHR Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health

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Aboriginal Health Research News

Message from Dr. Malcolm King, IAPH Scientific Director

The 2011 National Household Survey

Statistics Canada has begun to release the data from the 2011 National Household Survey. The good news? Ongoing faster population growth for First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and continued younger population profiles. Aboriginal people – just over 1.4 million of us – now make up 4.3% of Canada's population, up from 3.8% in 2006. Inuit are the youngest population group reported – median age 23 versus the overall 41 years for the Canadian population.

Nevertheless, the 2011 survey has its limitations because for the first time, answering its questions was not compulsory. The flaws? Two of them, in my opinion, limit the usefulness of the data, which is very unfortunate for researchers who rely on this data and for Aboriginal communities looking for data to support decision-making. The increase in overall uncertainty is caused by the increase in non-completion rate, from 6.5% in 2006 to 31% in 2011. Further, certain groups, such as First Nations, Inuit and Métis, are less likely to complete the long form, leading to increased uncertainties in their data. This will inevitably introduce further biases in estimates of age, cultural, linguistic and regional demographics. Given the faster population growth among Aboriginal peoples, it is an urgent concern that needs to be addressed. Reliable data on our demographics are important to many aspects of Aboriginal life, including health and wellbeing.

Despite the uncertainties, the positive trends of recent censuses - ongoing faster population growth for First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and continued younger population - appear to be continuing.

Highlights from our Institute Advisory Board meeting

On May 16-17th in Toronto, the IAPH Institute Advisory Board (IAB) met to discuss various topics, which we can some shed some light on now; apologies for some of the vagueness in this article. The intention is to let you know where the institute is heading, keeping people informed and interested in IAPH activities. At this particular meeting, the board devoted considerable time to revising the IAPH strategic plan; details on the new plan will follow in the upcoming months. We also had the privilege of welcoming Dr. Chantelle Richmond from Western University. Chantelle gave an excellent presentation on behalf the NEAHR investigators entitled *Transformative Networks: How ACADRE/NEAHR support for graduate students has impacted Aboriginal health research in Canada*; details will be available on the AHRNet website in the near future. Dr. Nancy Edwards, Scientific Director of the Institute of Population and Public Health, also presented to the IAB. Her presentation focused on a new CIHR Signature Initiative on Environment and Health, which has potential relevance to our Institute, details to follow in the fall or early winter. And finally, a few words to let you know about an Indigenous Mentorship Workshop, held jointly with colleagues from Australia and New Zealand in late May. Drs. Margo Greenwood, Catherine Cook and Lee Wilson represented the IAB at this milestone gathering, accompanied by a small group of distinguished mentors and rising young investigators. You will find a brief overview on this workshop in the June newsletter. Hopefully, this short summary got your attention and you will be motivated to read the future issues of the newsletter, which will elaborate on many of the topics discussed at the May IAB meeting. As they say, stay tuned for more details.

Funding Results

IAPH would like to congratulate the researchers who were successful in the following IAPH supported funding opportunities. For more details on the researchers and their funded projects, follow the links provided.

Fellowship - Priority Announcement: IAPH Quantitative Research

Anita Benoit - Women's College Hospital (Toronto)

Linking social and basic sciences to understand stress as a social indicator for the lived experiences of Aboriginal women and a biological indicator for the physiological impact of stress on HIV pathogenesis

Nuno Ribeiro - University of Regina

Cultural determinants of Aboriginal youth health: Translating Indigenous knowledge into quantitative outcomes using the cultural consensus and cultural consonance models

Fellowship - Priority Announcement: Aboriginal Research Methodologies

Margaret Robinson - Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Toronto)

Two-Spirited Talking Circle Series

Benita Tam - University of Waterloo

Delineating culturally-appropriate adaptation strategies to the health effects of climate change for a subarctic First Nation community through a community-based participatory research approach

Fellowship - PA: Research in First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit health

Eli Nix - Lakehead University

Prevention of Invasive Haemophilus Influenzae Infection in Canadian Aboriginal Communities

Catherine Pirkle - Université Laval

Oceanic and human health through the lens of food security: A global health study

Allison REEVES - University of Toronto

Aboriginal Healing from Complex Traumas: Integrating Western and Indigenous Therapies

Pathways session at the Canadian Obesity Summit and information on future presentations

IAPH recently organized and supported a session at the Third Canadian Obesity Summit, which was held in Vancouver, British Columbia. The session was entitled: Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples – Using Aboriginal Ways of Knowledge and Implementation Science to Address Obesity in First Nations, Inuit and Metis Populations. We would like to publicly thank Drs. Evan Adams and Noreen Willows for taking time from their busy schedules to present at the workshop. The session was very much appreciated by the participants, and a thoughtful discussions ensued, which is always a good omen. The session focused on the obesity epidemic affecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis, on how social determinants of health and of Aboriginal specific determinants mediate obesity, on the use of a sociological framework to better understand the complexity of obesity in Aboriginal communities, and finally on how the *Pathways to Health Equity for Aboriginal Peoples* funding opportunities will support research on how to evaluate and scale up interventions to address obesity in Aboriginal communities.

As the Pathways Initiative roles out over the next few months, we are looking forward to speaking to as many researchers, communities, and Aboriginal Organizations as possible and explaining how they might become involved in Pathways. In June, Drs. Nancy Edwards, Malcolm King and Diego Garcia, will be hosting a session at the Canadian Population Health Association annual conference, see page 17 of the preliminary program for more information. If you are attending the conference, we would be pleased to talk with you about Pathways. IAPH will also be hosting webinars over the next few months to reach out to as many people as possible. In the meantime, if you have any burning questions about the Pathways Initiative, you can also contact Paul Belanger and he will be pleased to answer your questions. The IAPH newsletter will also a be a good place to look for more information about Pathways related funding opportunities as will the future Pathways Website.

3RD CANADIAN OBESITY SUMMIT

The Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health fosters the advancement of a national health research agenda to improve and promote the health of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada, through research, knowledge translation and capacity building. The Institute's pursuit of research excellence is enhanced by respect for community research priorities and Indigenous knowledge, values and cultures.

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